

VOICE OF MISSIONS



BY WAY OF THE CROSS

REV. H. B. PARKS, D. D.,
General Secretary Missionary Department A. M. E. Church, Room 811111, New York City

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NO. 3.

LETTER FROM SIERRA

LEONE, AFRICA.

DR. SNELSON IN THE INTERIOR.

Sights, Scenes and Narrow Escape From Death.

THE MITE SOCIETY IN AFRICA.

Grand Meetings and Bright Prospects.

The King Visits the Place of Worship.

Mr. Editor: As is my usual custom and chief joy I spent my "Xmas" and "New Year" season in the interior among our hinterland A. M. E. Mission stations. Thursday, 22nd December, 1898, we left Freetown, and after four hours travel our canoe was wrecked, and we, however, managed to secure a foothold on land just in the nick of time. If it had been five minutes later all of us would have been lost in the sea. How good God is! It is marvelous in our eyes. The government officer, Mr. Cole, secured passage for me that night after providing us a good meal and rest, and by 4 o'clock Friday morning we were at "Rotunda" where we held services at 5:30. Sister Sallie Dunning, Bro. John Dove, Sisters Davis, Baber, Byron, Bucklehead, we found holding on to the "faith once given to the saints." One new probationer, Bro. John Babers, was received and placed on class. A good collection was lifted and deposited in the treasury. Bro. John Dove.

By the kindness of a good friend, T. J. Williams, Esq., the keeper of the French factory, the church will be renovated, and otherwise renovated.

Much inspiration attended this visit and the Canadian church here agreed to hear from Sister M. J. Sisco, and society at Windsor, Canada. The war here is over, and the outlook very consoling.

We passed on to Malibu. We have no agent here since the beginning of the uprising. Our people are still there and crying for the gospel of the Savior! We stop also at Malibu; our Sierra Leone members are all gone but the native brethren and sisters urged me to send the "Goodman" and the good book "back soon." The meeting place and Mission house are not hurt, but the chief fell into the hands of the law and now languishes in Freetown prison; so "Malibu" was considerably dreary, especially when remembrances of fonder days came thick and fast. We need more money to support more good Missionaries for each of these places.

Saturday morning, December 24th, '98, we reached "Sara" (Gorham Mission) safely. We find Lieutenant J. H. W. Gooding and wife with a dozen children and more women all cleaning the campus, Mission house and "Allen Chapel" preparing for "Xmas celebrations." Xmas eve was indeed a busy day for us all. The bees were being slaughtered, so were the sheep and goats, and fresh meats were being received into every house. Fresh fish came up out of the river seemingly voluntarily, and the Missionaries and Presiding Elders were remembered kindly by every family in Magbelly; Christians, Mohammedans, Pagans, all alike, were very kind to us, and the mission house was certainly a delightful "Xmas Eve" with most satisfactory.

7 o'clock. Early morning prayers.

7 o'clock. Men's class meeting.

11 o'clock. "Xmas Eve" by the singing of "Hallelujahs" by the choir.

11 o'clock. Men's class meeting.

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Magbilly will tell to all the towns around, What a dear Savior she has found!

Sartigee Bankora was cordial to me in every way; secured hammock for me and Gladie Bankora; gave me one dollar to pay one carrier's expenses. I cannot tell in further detail here the innumerable kindnesses of every one at Magbilly. We trod on, passing through Marampa Land and Mafoke Land, and final desolation of war on all sides. Bleached bones of slaughtered rebels are to be seen all along the route. Towns burnt down, fruitful fields destroyed, farms uncultivated, roads, bridges broken and gone and a thousand dreary marks of death and carnage! War is terrible! We reach our San Diego mission in charge of Bro. F. M. Stewart; we preach and hold prayer meeting Wednesday morning and evening, 29th inst. The attendance, 40 persons; and they welcomed us heartily after an absence of six months. An excellent new native Mission house has been provided and presented \$1.50 worth of cloth to the donor of our seat premises. The outlook here is exceedingly bright for the new year. I. A. Pratt furnished us two carrier men and the members extended other courtesies. I was on Tuesday night here that I saw the eclipse of the moon December 27th, 1898, from 9:30 to 12 midnight. The Tinnies theory is that the "frog" was swallowing the moon and should be succeeded, the world would come to an end and so they could not eat and so. So while the moon was in eclipse the Tinnies pagans formed in procession with every musical instrument they could get and marched, shouted, danced and sang:

Yibokla Tia Tio Yonkoka!

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"New Year's Monday" the Bethel Auxiliary Mite Missionary Society has killed us for an annual sermon for their first anniversary. The people were all there on hand. The society of only twelve members had all been faithful, and we told them of Esther's plaintive cry for her people; described the fearful situation then and now; urged them all to dress for the King's presence, and assured them that King Jesus would also hold out to "Bethel" the golden scepter of divine favor; showed them the seal of the King's ring, declaring that their people would be saved, a new life, a new heart and a new church granted, and joy was indescribable.

"New Year's Tuesday" the public meeting was held. John A. Hanson, Esq., presided. Addresses by Brother Williams, Brother McCauley, Brother Michael Smith. Then Brother T. S. Clay, honorary secretary, read the following:

ANNUAL REPORT BETHEL MITE SOCIETY.

SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA.

Our little vessel was on the ocean of time for full twelve months plus one. We are thankful to Almighty God that, despite all the roughness of the sea, with its shoals, banks and swells, our little vessel was on the ocean sailing slowly, yet surely, until we came to our desired haven, where we would be.

When we made a start of the little but lovely Dove Missionary Society, we had seen before and about us dark clouds hanging over our heads; but no sooner the effort had been put forth, depending wholly and solely upon the Captain of our Salvation, even Jesus, by way of experience the dark clouds which had been hanging so gloomily over us, we feel happy to say

paid the Pastor faithfully, made many improvements. Some palm nuts and oil and coffee has been gathered during the year and "Bethel" is one of the best appointments in the Conference.

The membership has increased fourteen in the past few months.

On our way home we held services at "Balaba," where the people need a Missionary sorely. We were entertained by Brother and Sister York at "Tumbou," by Tobias D. K. Brown, Esq., custom officer, at "Kikouk," who has just inducted his beautiful bride into his new home. Wedding cake and nuptial fare generally cheered the weary traveler immensely. We thank them all from our heart of hearts we ask God to bless them all!

After three nights and two and a half days of miserable travel we are again at our office, having visited all our interior stations, except Mateneh.

In closing this letter I desire to acknowledge the receipt of \$1.00 from the A. M. E. Church on the West Coast of Africa, all of whom are natives except four: Rev. F. C. Snelson, Ph. D.; Rev. L. C. Curtis, B. D.; and Rev. W. H. Heard, D. D. Their efforts to Christianize the natives has been very successful thus far considering the limited means for their support at the disposal of the Board. Our membership in Liberia and the Sierra Leone Annual Conference is 3,500.

The above picture will give an idea of what is being accomplished by the missionaries of the A. M. E. Church on the West Coast of Africa. The picture represents a Sunday School of native children, celebrating Children's Day, Free Town, Sierra Leone. Rev. George Dove Decker is pastor of this congregation. The A. M. E. Church on the West Coast of Africa, all of whom are natives except four: Rev. F. C. Snelson, Ph. D.; Rev. L. C. Curtis, B. D.; and Rev. W. H. Heard, D. D. Their efforts to Christianize the natives has been very successful thus far considering the limited means for their support at the disposal of the Board. Our membership in Liberia and the Sierra Leone Annual Conference is 3,500.

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